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Recommended Citation

University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations, "Montana is up for MSU game" (1971).
University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present. 25432.
<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/newsreleases/25432>

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MONTANA IS UP
FOR MSU GAME

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"We don't have to get the boys up for this one," UM Grizzly coach Jack Swarthout said this week, in reference to Saturday's game with Montana State. "They are up."

It is traditional that the Grizzlies from Missoula and the Bobcats from Bozeman look upon their annual clash as the big game of the season. This year neither team is in the running for the conference title, but it will be a big game nonetheless.

Kickoff time for the sellout battle at Gatton Field is 1 p.m.

Montana has a few advantages going into this, its ninth game: the Grizzlies have a better record, are healthier and are coming off a big win against Weber State, while MSU has won only two games, has key injuries and lost last weekend, 52-24, to Boise State. But records and injuries have had little to do with the outcome of UM-MSU games in the past and Swarthout is well aware of that.

"We know they can have a hot day and beat anyone," Swarthout says. "And they would like nothing better than to whip the Grizzlies. We'll have to play a good game to beat them."

The main thing the Bobcats have going for them is that they have shown they can stop the "Wishbone" attack. They did so three weeks ago in Bozeman when Weber State was lucky to escape town with a 21-21 tie.

The Grizzlies will have to be alert for both the rushing and passing game when they meet the Bobcats. The Bozeman squad is almost evenly divided statistically between the two. After eight games MSU has gained 1,601 yards rushing and 1,116 yards passing.

Bozeman's regular quarterback, Zoonie McLean, is recovering from a shoulder injury, saw some action in last weekend's game with Boise State and may get into the game this weekend. But sophomore quarterback, Larry Eyer, who played his high school ball at Missoula Hellgate, will apparently start.

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Eyer has completed 28 of 87 passes for 480 yards and three touchdowns. McLean has thrown 113 times with 47 completions for 609 yards and two touchdowns. The loss of McLean hurts MSU's ground game as well. Despite limited action since Oct. 16, he is still the team's second leading rusher with 91 carries for 304 yards.

MSU's leading ground gainer, bruising sophomore fullback Gary Michael, will give the Montana defensive interior a lot of work to do Saturday. He is the biggest fullback in the league at 6-2, 233 lbs., and is the second leading rusher in the Big Sky Conference, behind Montana's Steve Caputo, with 100 carries for 468 yards.

Montana is healthy again this week and will start the same lineup offensively and defensively that it did against Weber State. Swarthout is very pleased with the health of his team this year and had high praise this week for longtime trainer Naseby Rhinehart.

"We just listen to Naseby and do what he says and we stay healthy," Swarthout says.

Montana State will have to contain perhaps the strongest backfield in the Conference--halfbacks Caputo and Casey Reilly and strong freshman fullback Buddy Walsh. Quarterback Gary Berding will lead the attack and will have on the line Glen Welch at split end, John Lugviel at left tackle, Willie Postler at left guard, Ray Stachnik at center, Barry Darrow at right guard, Steve Okoniewski at right tackle and Jim Hann at tight end.

Defensively Montana will go with Greg Maloney at left end, Gary Swearingen at left tackle, Rick Anderson at right tackle, Leo LaRoche at right end, Bill Sterns at left line-backer, Ron Rosenburg at middle linebacker, right linebacker Bruce Spencer, right corner-back Robin Peters, left cornerback Dean Dempsey, strong safety Bob Guptill and free safety Mick Dennehy.

The series between the two schools is the longest one Montana has. It dates back to 1897, and Missoula has won 44, lost 21 and tied five. The longest win streak was Montana's 19 victories in a row from 1909 to 1927. Some years they played twice and some years not at all. The most recent win streak was MSU's, from 1963 through 1968. The Grizzlies scraped by, 7-6, in the 1969 contest and won big in 1970, 35-0.